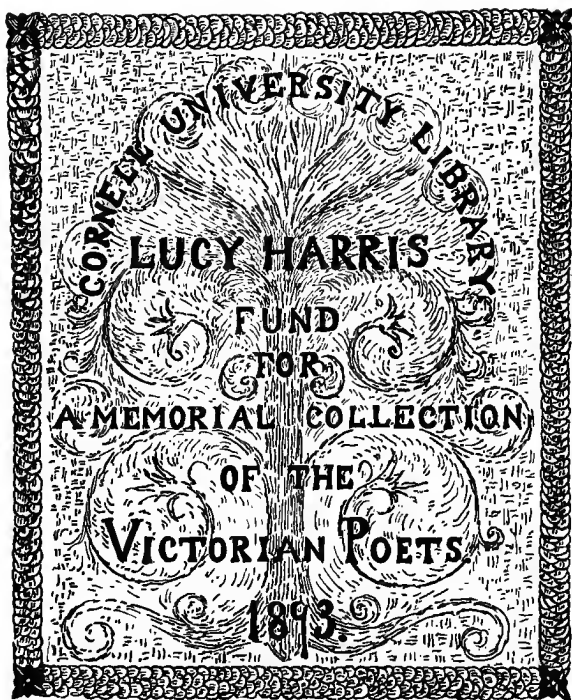




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BOUDOIR BALLADS.

PRINTED BY BALLANTYNE, HANSON AND CO.
EDINBURGH AND LONDON

BOUDOIR BALLADS.

BY

J. ASHBY-STERRY,

AUTHOR OF "TINY TRAVELS," "SHUTTLECOCK PAPERS," ETC.



SECOND EDITION.

London

CHATTO AND WINDUS, PICCADILLY.

1877.

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THE KEY-NOTE.

I take the dainty quill of dove,

A baby harp of joy :

I pen the lightest phase of love,

I sing the fragile toy.

I rave about a damsel's dress

And versify on lace ;

I burnish gold on tiny tress,

And praise a pretty face.

I'd pen a fancy for a flirt,

And rhyme on Beauty's bills ;

Or write a sonnet on her skirt,

A Laureate of Frills !



MY LADY'S BOUDOIR.

I.

HER Boudoir is a charming oasis,
'Mid dull arid deserts of life ;
'Tis the elegant haunt of the Graces
Set free from society's strife ;
'Tis a haven of rest amid trouble—
When the prism of fashion has flown—
O'er the wreck of the froth of the bubble
My Lady can ponder alone

II.

She can tell to her love-birds her sorrow,
When no interloper is nigh ;
She may hope for the joy of to-morrow,
Or hopelessly have 'a good cry !'
Ah, what dreams she can dream in the twilight!—
When no longer acting a part—
In that exquisite mystical shy light,
What truth she may tell to her heart !

III.

Far away from all prying beholders,
Their praise or their blame she may flout ;
She may shake her bewitching white shoulders,
Or sulkily grumble and pout :
She may take crumpled notes from her pocket,
And study them oft by the hour ;
She may muse o'er a face in her locket—
Sigh over a poor faded flow'r.

IV.

In her moments of grief or dejection,
 (Her life without these may not pass),
She'll reflect on the tearful reflection—
 A pretty sad face in the glass !
Or when dimpled bright Joy may have kist her
 As Love comes his darling to claim—
She will smile on her pretty twin sister,
 Who smiles upon her from the frame !

V.

'Tis an elegant chamber and cosy,
 In taste it is simple and true,
And its rich window-curtains are rosy,
 Its walls are of *céladon* hue :
They are hung with Du Maurier's sketchings
 Of satire of *salon* or street,
And with Rajon and Whistler's etchings
 And favourite *cartes de visite*.

VI.

Just a touch of the craze chinacritic
Is shown in those Staffordshire mugs ;
In the plates, with their dragons erratic,
And curious Japanese jugs.
In the quaint old Majolica fishes,
The hideous Indian elves,
And the rare Dresden figures and dishes,
That stand on the Chippendale shelves.

VII.

See the chairs, like to couches of heather ;
The carpet, like moss to the tread ;
And the screen of choice Cordovan leather,
The sofa as soft as a bed ;
The quaint mirrors that came from Murano,
The skins of the chamois and sheep,
With the daintiest little piano,
And lounges that lull you to sleep.

VIII.

There's a clock with bright blossoms for numbers,
And minutes enamelled in blue,
With old Time, scarce awake from his slumbers,
Reposing on rich *ormolu* ;
Golden pointers are silently chasing—
Quite deaf to the argentine ring—
They loiter not once in their racing,
Tho' Beauty may sorrow or sing !

IX.

Can she stay that old scythe with her treasure ?
Can flowers hide fugitive Time ?
Is the knell of each fast-fading pleasure
Tolled sweeter by silvery chime ?
She may cheat herself, if she is able,
And play with the enemy tricks—
'Rose past lily' is only a fable,
It means but a quarter past six !

X.

Would you look at the varied selection
Of books, in this snug little spot?
See the authors who gain her affection,
With Thackeray, Dickens, and Scott?
Tho' Minerva she fancies a bore is,
She loves those who laugh when they teach—
See the volumes of verses and stories,
The scrap-book of sketches by Leech.

XI.

See her desk with its elegant litter
Of letters half penned and half read;
With the Genoese inkstand a-glitter,
Where petals of roses are shed :
See her half-opened purse and her papers,
A glove and some charms on a chain,
And the seals and the rose-coloured tapers,
Her keys and a steel *châtelaine*.

XII.

See the basket of work half completed,
The braiding that's hardly begun,
And the pictures so girlfully treated,
The sketches all brimming with fun :
See the Cupids that clamour for kisses—
Well drawn by a dear little maid—
And the work of Old Masters, young misses
Have thrown for a time in the shade !

XIII.

'Tis the pleasantest place in the Spring-time
To lounge thro' the bright sunny hours,
When we hope longer days may soon bring time
All gay with new bonnets and flow'rs ;
When the chesnuts at Bushey are snowy,
And Hope brighter destiny weaves,
When the hyacinth-glasses are showy,
And Nature turns over new leaves.

XIV.

Ah ! a chat in this chamber so nice is,
When girls twine their tresses with blue,
And make bets on the Cam and the Isis,
And worship their favourite crew ;
When Spring, with her touch talismanic,
Leaves Winter to desolate doom ;
And the tent at the breezy Botanic
Is rich in a revel of bloom !

XV.

When sweet May, with a bountiful measure,
Rains down her bright blossoms in showers ;
And when duty seems almost a pleasure,
And life nought but sunshine and flowers !
When the dawn of the Season's unclouded—
As London is once more alive—
With the Opera daintily crowded,
And thronged are the Row and the Drive.

XVI.

How they dote on each merry May Meeting—
I don't mean at Exeter Hall—
But the gossip, the chatter and greeting
Pervading each concert and ball ;
The words that are whispered in waltz-time,
To butterfly flutter of flirts ;
When fairy feet falter in false time,
To *frou-frou* of feminine skirts !

XVII.

Ah ! the days down at Ascot delicious,
The skies of forget-me-not blue ;
And those meetings, of course adventitious,
On Sunday, so oft, at the Zoo.
O the ceaseless flirtation and chatter !
What tales one could tell, if he durst,
Of the loves that are lost at the latter,
The gloves that are won at the first !

XVIII.

Then the mornings of picture reviewing
Within the Academy walls ;
And the terrible headaches ensuing,
The worry of callers and calls !
Ah ! the scent of the violet blending,
With ballad some beauty may sing—
Chords of sound and of perfume transcending,
The magical music of Spring !

XIX.

'Tis a bower of bliss in the Summer,
When swallows sing low in the eaves,
And the advent of any fresh comer
Is hymned by the music of leaves ;
When the air with sweet perfume is laden,
And quiver the gay stripen blinds ;
When the bright blushing cheek of each maiden
Is kissed by the soft summer winds !

XX.

How they reckon each joyous occasion,
Where bright sunny hours shall be spent,
And make plans for a girlish invasion
To lunch in some Wimbledon tent ;
If their frills should be wide worn or narrow,
If skirts should be lengthy or short ;
Of the chances of Eton and Harrow,
Or being presented at Court.

XXI.

Then their partners they praise and disparage,
Or fling back their soft scented hair,
And talk over the latest good marriage
And dresses at Hanover Square.
How they prattle without rhyme or reason !
Or, hushed in some dainty day-dream,
They will hum the last waltz of the season,
Or banquet off strawberry-cream !

XXII.

Then how gladly each overdanced martyr
Will give up her 'afternoon Park,'
Just to dine at the dear 'Star and Garter,'
And snugly drive home in the dark !
How the light in bright eyes brighter kindles,
As darlings will joyfully vote,
To run down to luncheon at Skindle's,
And moon up to Marlow by boat !

XXIII.

O the boredom at old Lady Quince's !
Whose dinners are terribly slow,
O the rapture of rinking at Prince's !
Tho' wheel is a prelude to woe.
O the joy of a crisp early canter !
The lounge in the Park 'neath the trees :
And the gossip, the scandal, and banter,
And fun at the Hurlingham teas !

XXIV.

When my Lady is dreamily playing,
What fancies she'll oft improvise !
As her dimpled white fingers are straying
In ecstasy over the keys !
And the eyes of your *innamorata*
Remind you such moments are fleet—
As she plays you the ' Moonlight Sonata,'
Or sings to you ' Summer is Sweet !'

XXV.

'Tis a glorious lounge in the Autumn,
When girls show a longing to roam,
And declare that the swallows have taught 'em
'Tis time to be flitting from home !
When the pink on the peach almost matches
The bloom on the cheek of my fair,
And the gleam on the corn nearly catches
The hue of the gold in her hair !

XXVI.

When the sun of the Season is setting—
As London her legion disbands—
When each beauty quits ball-room coquetting,
For flirting on Scarborough sands !
When Terpsichore's own picaninny—
As Fashion unshackles her slaves—
Leaves the music of Coote and of Tinney,
For singing of surf-sighing waves !

XXVII.

They are full then of bustle and hurry,
And long to be off on their flight ;
For they read nought but *Bradshaw* and *Murray*
And guide-books from morning till night.
They pant for the worry and clatter
Of *diligence*, railway and boat,
And they long for the polyglot chatter
Endured at each gay *table d'hôte* !

XXVIII.

They are ripe for the roughest exertion,
And talk about doing Mont Blanc,
As they dream of the Alpine excursion,
The mule and the slow *char-à-banc* ;
Or of rising, when daylight is dawning,
In Italy's climate divine ;
And of dinner on deck, 'neath the awning,
By vine-clustered hills of the Rhine !

XXIX.

O the vision of girlish distresses,
The pitiful pouting of pets !
As they chat over ' knock-about ' dresses,
And talk over thick ulsterettes !
Ah ! the chorus of maidens ecstatic,
Who long for the Chamouni pines ;
For a glimpse of the blue Adriatic,
Or sight of the rich Apennines !

XXX.

O the picture of packing and pleasure,
The flutter that reigns in the nest !
And the mixture of labour and leisure—
The days full of bustle and rest.
As the Queen of the flitting unravels
New plans for the pluming of wings ;
Or perchance slumbers o'er 'Tiny Travels,'
Or sweetly 'The Vagabond' sings.

XXXI.

'Tis the snuggest retreat in the Winter,
When dreary and short are the days ;
When the beech-billets crackle and splinter,
When ruddy and bright is the blaze ;
When the room is deliciously mellow—
Weird shadows come fast as they go—
And the ceiling is chequered and yellow,
And gloom gives a glory to glow.

XXXII.

When the lamp, with its shade opalescent,
To chestnut turns bonny brown curls,
And the laughter of maids effervescent
Wells up from the prattle of girls !
Then their wisdom seems nothing but folly,
But folly seems almost divine,
When lips laugh at the red of the holly,
And mistletoe hangs as a sign !

XXXIII.

In the midst of this weather hibernal
Will beauty indulge in a pique ?
Will she find an enjoyment supernal,
In patience, in chess, or *bézique* ?
Or perchance with sheer laziness smitten
She has nothing then left to desire—
If she curls like her own Persian kitten,
And basks in her fur by the fire !

XXXIV.

She may sit with her feet on the fender,
And gaze upon dainty kid shoes ;
She may grow sentimental and tender,
Or sing off a fit of the ' blues.'
She may muse there in dreamy quiescence—
A Gheber you see at a glance—
And read in the logs' incandescence,
A world of the wildest romance.

XXXV.

Ah ! what plans for the passing of slow time
Some fur-coated beauty imparts,
As she sighs for the sleighing in snow-time,
And laughs at the slaying of hearts !
For this sweet little siren in sable—
Who looks so bewitchingly nice—
Is as willing, as ready and able,
To tempt us on dangerous ice !

XXXVI.

How she longs for the hyaline ice-time
And musical ring of the skate !
As she plays with sweet feeling and nice time
‘Les Patineurs,’ from *Le Prophète*.
Or with Dickens’s grand Christmas stories
She dreams in the close-curtained bay,
And forgets in their magical glories,
The dull Christmas-tide of to-day.

XXXVII.

You may listen to plots histrionic
For whiling long evenings away,
With charades or a *proverbe* laconic,
Some *tableaux*, a concert or play :
And you’ll hear how mere novices hanker—
With faith in their untested pow’rs—
To attempt to play Lady Gay Spanker,
Or e’en Mary Netley in *Ours* !

XXXVIII.

There's something omitted. I know it,
And own it at once when I say,
If I had but the pen of a poet,
And magical brush of Millais,
I should feel I'd neglected no duty—
As sadly I say *Au revoir*—
Forced to leave undescribed the chief beauty
That reigns in My Lady's Boudoir.





PET'S PUNISHMENT.

I.



IF my love offended me,
And we had words together,
To show her I would master be,
I'd whip her with a feather !

II.

If then she, like a naughty girl,
Would tyranny declare it,
I'd give my pet a cross of pearl,
And make her always bear it.

III.

If still she tried to sulk and sigh,
And threw away my posies,
I'd catch my darling on the sly,
And smother her with roses !

IV.

But should she clench her dimpled fists,
Or contradict her betters,
I'd manacle her tiny wrists
With dainty golden fetters.

V.

And if she dared her lips to pout—
Like many pert young misses—
I'd wind my arm her waist about,
And punish her—with kisses !



IN A BALCONY AT BARNES.

8th April 1876.

I.

NO prudish professors from Girton,
Altho' they're a couple of 'blues,'
Who know more of rowing 'tis certain
Than strong-minded Beckerite 'views.'
Such beauties seem made to be petted—
So smiling, bewitching, and bright,
So daintily gloved and rosetted,
Such Queens of the Dark and the Light !

II.

They prattle of 'smartness of feather,'
And talk about 'winning the toss ;'
They chatter of 'keeping together,'
Of errors in 'steering across.'
Each feels that her own crew is winning,
And speaks of a 'glorious spurt ;'
They know that to 'catch the beginning,'
Is good for a rower—or flirt !

III.

When blue blades flash past on the river,
Then anxious are blue-bedight girls :
In bosoms forget-me-nots shiver,
And violets nestle in curls !
They breathlessly wait for the crisis—
As boats hurry fast to the mark—
Will Cam throw a pallor on Isis ?
Or tears turn light ribbons to dark ?

IV.

Then pull for the pride of the river—
For tiny cerulean glove,
For droplets of turquoise that quiver
In ears of the girl whom you love ;
For the *lazuli* bracelet that presses
The wrist of your own little pet,
For glory of azure-twined tresses—
Pull hard for the blonde and brunette !

V.

When oarsmen have ceased their appliance,
When finished the muscular fight,
Will pluck and Oxonian science
Be conquered by 'sweetness and light ?'
Though Fortune you fancy capricious,
'Twill scarcely be cause for surprise,
If violet's perfume delicious
Be vanquished by bright watchet eyes



RÉGRETTS.

I.



FOR the look of those pure grey eyes—

Seeming to plead and speak—

The parted lips and the deep-drawn sighs,

The blush on the kissen cheek !

II.

O for the tangle of soft brown hair,

Lazily blown by the breeze ;

The fleeting hours unshadowed by care,

Shaded by tremulous trees !

III.

O for the dream of those sunny days,
With their bright unbroken spell,
And the thrilling sweet untutored praise—
From the lips once loved too well !

IV.

O for the feeling of days ago,
The simple faith and the truth,
The spring of time and life's rosy dawn—
O for the love and the youth !





TWO AND TWO:

A Song of School Girls.

I.

COME the little ones in frocks,
With their broidered knickerbocks,
And their tangled sunny locks—

Laughing crew !

Come the dimpled darling pets,
With their tresses all in nets,
And their snow-white pantalettes

Just in view :

Come the gay and graceful girls,
With their chignons and their curls—
Sweetest string of Beauty's pearls,
Two and two !

II.

What delicious laughter trills,
When rude Boreas half wills,
Just to flutter fairy frills
All askew !
And as petticoats are short,
Frequent glimpses may be caught—
Though p'raps this may be naught
Unto you—
Of small, deftly booted feet,
Of slim legs and ankles neat,
Passing by you much too fleet
Two and two !

III.

On the Book of Beauty's page

Fairer girls of ev'ry age,

Skilful artist, I'll engage,

Never drew.

Tender Ten may dote on toys,

While for Twelve jam tarts have joys,

Feat Fourteen's in love with boys—

Not a few ;

And sweet, bonny, bright Sixteen

Wears an arch coquettish mien,

As they walk upon the Green

Two and two !

IV.

Here the coming flirt appears,

With the belle of after-years,

And the beauty even peers

May pursue :

Each Lilliputian fair
Gallant Guardsmen may ensnare,
Or enthrall a millionaire,
 And subdue !
Who would think such mischief lies
In the future of their sighs,
Or such pretty childlike eyes—
 Two and two ?

v.

There are eyes of peerless brown,
That in time may take the town ;
There are others drooping down—
 Black or blue—
Whose bright flashes you may find
Will be-dazzle—nay, may blind—
E'en the wisest of mankind,
 False and true.

Pouting lips we cannot miss,
Sweet foreshadowings of bliss—
Which, in truth, seem made to kiss
Two and two !

VI.

When school studies are all done,
And life's lessons have begun,
And rich lovers, one by one,
Gladly sue :
When each bright-eyed little pet,
Leaves De Porquet for Debrett ;
Or perchance a coronet
Comes to woo—
They have learnt, for after-life,
That the husband and the wife
Should together face its strife
Two and two !



WEARY.

I.

I'M sick of the world and its trouble,
I'm weary of pleasures that cloy,
I see through the bright-coloured bubble,
And find no enjoyment in joy.

II.

Is all that we earn worth the earning?
Is all that we gain worth the prize?
Is all that we learn worth the learning?
Is pleasure but pain in disguise?

III.

Is sorrow e'er worth our dejection ?

Is fame but a flatterer's spell ?

Is love ever worth our affection ?

Le jeu vaut-il, donc, la chandelle ?

IV.

O where are the eyes that enthralled us,

And where are the lips that we kissed ?

Where the siren-like voices that called us,

And where all the chances we missed ?

V.

We know not what mortals call pleasure—

For clouded are skies that were blue ;

To dross now has melted our treasure,

And false are the hearts that were true.

VI.

The flowers we gathered are faded,
The leaves of our laurels are shed ;
Our spirit is broken and jaded,
The hopes of our youth are all dead.

VII.

We feel life is hopeless and dreary,
Now night has o'ershadowed our day ;
Bright fruits of this earth only weary,
They ripen—to fall and decay !

VIII.

I'm sick of the world and its trouble,
For rest and seclusion I thirst ;
I'm tired of the gay tinted bubble,
That brighteneth only to burst !



NUMBER ONE.

PORTRAIT OF A YOUNG LADY,

'No. 1,' in a collection of one thousand five hundred and eighty-three works of art, at the Exhibition of the Royal Academy.

1.

MY favourite, you must know,
In the Piccadilly Show,
Is the portrait of a lass
Bravely done.

'Mid the fifteen eighty-three
Works of art that you may see,
There is nothing can surpass—
'Number One!'

II.

Very far above the line
Is this favourite of mine ;
 You may see her smiling there
 O'er the crowds.
If you bring a good *lorgnette*,
You may see my dainty pet ;
 Like the Jungfrau, pink and fair,
 'Mid the clouds.

III.

My enchanting little star,
How I wonder what you are,
 With your rosy laughing lips
 Full of fun.
Have you many satellites,
Do you shine so bright o' nights,
 That there's nothing can eclipse
 ' Number One ? '

IV.

Are you constant in your loves?

Do you change them with your gloves?

Pray does Worth pervade your train—

Or your heart?

Are you fickle, are you leal,

Are your sunny tresses real,

Or your roses only vain

Works of art?

V.

I sincerely envy him

Who the fortune had to limn

Your bewitching hazel eyes

With his brush:

Who could study ev'ry grace

In your winsome little face,

And the subtle charm that lies

In your blush.

VI.

I am sure it is a shame
That your pretty face and frame,
Ruthless hangers out of view
Seek to hide :
But no doubt Sir Francis G—
And his myrmidons agree,
Peerless angels such as you—
Should be ‘ skyed ! ’

VII.

Ah ! were I but twenty-two,
I would hinge the knee to you,
And most humbly kiss your glove
At your throne :
Thrice happy he whose sighs
Draw this sweet Heart Union prize
In the lottery of Love
For his own !


VIII.

If I knew but your papa,
Could I only 'ask mama,'
It is clear enough to me
As the sun,
That all through this weary life,
'Mid its pleasure, pain, and strife,
All my care and love should be
'Number One.'





FALSE OR TRUE?

 RUTH frequently lies, I've oft heard tell,
In deepest depths of a deep, deep well:
Can you imagine it always lies
In fathomless depths of sweet brown eyes?





THE TWO MOTHERS.

First Picture.

I.

HE loves the *gandin's* vapid stare,
And praise from all beholders—
Adopts the latest tint in hair,
And whitens thick her shoulders !
Her smiles are perfect works of art,
And Worth makes all her dresses ;
Her love comes from a hollow heart—
From Brittany her tresses.

II.

Her sallies and her *jeux d'esprit*
Throughout the town are quoted,
For trenchant speech and repartee,
Madame is vastly noted.
She cares not for the love of girls—
Nor minds if they deride her—
Her ponies equal Cora Pearl's,
Her pearls out-Schneider Schneider !

III.

She sees her children now and then
With tolerant compassion ;
Perchance she'll learn to love them when
Maternity's the fashion.
A childlike kiss her bloom might spoil,
The dimpled hand of Mignon
In baby-play might chance uncoil
The fabric of her chignon.

By the Seine, 1868.

Second Picture.

I.

IN sunny girlhood's vernal life
She caused no small sensation ;
But now the modest English wife
To others leaves flirtation.
She's young still, lovely, debonair,
Although sometimes her features
Are clouded by a thought of care
For those two tiny creatures.

II.

Each tiny, toddling, mottled mite
Asserts with voice emphatic,
In lisping accents, ' Mite is right.'
Their rule is autocratic :

The song becomes, that charmed mankind,
Their musical narcotic,
And baby lips, than Love, she'll find,
Are even more despotic !

III.

Soft lullaby, when singing there,
And castles ever building—
Their destiny she'll carve in air,
Bright with maternal gilding :
Young Gny's a clever advocate—
So eloquent and able—
A powdered wig upon his pate,
A coronet for Mabel !

By the Thames, 1874.



DAISY'S DIMPLES.

I.

LITTLE dimples so sweet and soft,
Love the cheek of my love :
The mark of Cupid's dainty hand,
Before he wore a glove.

II.

Laughing dimples of tender love
Smile on my darling's cheek ;
Sweet hallowed spots where kisses lurk,
And play at hide and seek.

III.

Fain would I hide my kisses there
At morning's rosy light,
To come and seek them back again
In silver hush of night.





IN STRAWBERRY TIME.

I.

HOT, hot glows the sunshine in laughing July,
Scarce flutter the leaves in the soft summer
sigh :

The rooks scarcely swing on the tops of the trees,
While river-reeds nod to the odorous breeze :
A rose-leaf, a-bask in the sunshiny gleam,
Half sleeps in the dimples that chequer the stream ;
The dragon-fly hushes his day-dreamy lay,
The silver trout sulks in his sedge-shaded bay—
While our thoughts sweetly run in a soft singing rhyme,
As we lazily loiter in strawberry time !

II.

Sweet, sweet is the scent of the newly-mown
hay,

Light borne by the breeze on a bright summer's
day ;

And cool is the sound of the musical plash,
As bright bubbles fall in the fountain and
flash.

'Tis joy then to wander in gay golden hours,
And dream 'mid the hues of the bright-tinted
flow'rs ;

When the velvety lawn is most soft to the tread,
And ruddy fruit hangs in the leaf-covered
bed—

Then the roundest, the sweetest, the best of the
prime,

Will we gather together in strawberry time !

III.

Joy, joy 'tis to whisper and laugh in the
shade,

And pluck the ripe fruit for my hazel-eyed
maid ;

To watch her delight as she eagerly clips
A pink British Queen with her soft pouting
lips !

While lovingly gazing I'm apt to compare
The warm blushing berries with lips of my
fair ;

I'm doubtful, indeed, if the fruit of the South
Could equal the charm of her ripe little
mouth—

'Tis so round and so soft, 'twould be scarcely a
crime

All my doubts to dispel in sweet strawberry time !

IV.

Light, light is the laughter that carelessly
rings,

And sweet is the carol she tenderly sings !

I murmur a story we all of us know—

Her soft dainty dimples, they come and they
go ;

Her eyelids droop down o'er those sweet
little eyes,

Her laughter is hushed in a tumult of sighs :

Those pretty, plump fingers, red-stained to the
tips,

All tremble, while pouting are rosy-red
lips.

Then the bard whispers low, 'neath the tremulous
lime,

“ Lips sweeter than fruit are in strawberry time ! ”



A LOVER'S LULLABY.

I.

MIRROR your sweet eyes in mine, love,
See how they glitter and shine !
Quick fly such moments divine, love,
Link your lithe fingers in mine !

II.

Lay your soft cheek against mine, love,
Pillow your head on my breast ;
While your brown locks I entwine, love,
Pout your red lips when they're prest !

III.

Mirror your fate, then, in mine, love ;

Sorrow and sighing resign :

Life is too short to repine, love,

Link your fair future in mine !





TOO TRUE.

I.

‘**I**S over! It is done at last!
The fetters Cupid forges
Were riveted quite hard and fast,
Last Monday, at St. George’s.
A shoddycrat with ample means,
A priest intoning neatly,
A bishop and two rural deans,
Have tied the knot completely.

II.

And so you're on your honeymoon,
And wear a golden fetter ;
You speculate—'tis rather soon—
"Is it for worse or better?"
You're thinking of a year ago—
'Twas just such sunny weather—
But somehow time went not so slow
When we two were together.

III.

A year ago, those pretty eyes
A world of truth reflected ;
A year ago, your deepest sighs
I never half suspected :
A year ago, my tale I told,
And you were glad to listen ;
You were as pure, as good as gold,
Or any maid fresh kissen.

IV.

In life's brief play you chose your part,
Poor little foolish vendor !
You sold your trustful loving heart
For shoddy and for splendour.
The sky so blue, the sea so glad,
Brings joyous recollections ;
And yet you seem a world too sad
For honeymoon reflections !





LITTLE CHINCHILLA.

A Symphony in Fur.

I.

HE wears the shortest skirts,
And shows the whitest frilling;
She looks—as Queen of Flirts—
Miraculously killing!
She'll skim the thinnest ice,
As light as Queen Camilla,
She looks supremely nice—
My little pet Chinchilla!

II.

The sleekest otter cuffs—

The rosiest of real skin—

The sable-est of muffs—

The softest gloves of sealskin.

The quaintest hose with clocks,

A cloud like a mantilla,

The velvetest of frocks—

Wears little sweet Chinchilla !

III.

O should the gracious fates

But deign to be propitious ;

I strap her fairy skates,

On furry boots delicious.

Her willing hand I take—

In spite of Aunt Priscilla—

Then speed I o'er the lake,

With little love Chinchilla !

IV.

The warmth of her regard
I take as sort of token—
Although it's freezing hard—
Our social ice is broken !
Coquettish in her furs—
She minds not my Manila—
Ah ! what a glance is hers,
My little dear Chinchilla !

V.

She'll figure, glide and twirl,
And worry the officials ;
She'll cut out ev'ry girl,
As easy as initials !
O I could skate for miles—
Or dance a seguidilla—
Cheered by the sunny smiles
Of little smart Chinchilla !

IV.

Had I enough a year,
 To find my sweet in sable,—
To wrap my dainty dear
 In ermine were I able,—
Had I a longer purse,
 A neat suburban villa,—
For better or for worse
 I'd take my pet Chinchilla.






BLANKTON WEIR.

A Water-side Lyric.

I.

 IS a queer old pile of timbers, all gnarled and
rough and green,
Both moss-o'ergrown and weed-covered, and jagged
too, I ween !
'Tis battered and 'tis spattered, all worn and knocked
about,
Beclamped with rusty rivets, and bepatched with
timbers stout ;
A tottering, trembling structure, enshrining memories
dear,
This weather-beaten barrier, this quaint old Blankton
Weir.

II.

While leaning on those withered rails, what feelings
oft come back,

As I watch the white foam sparkling and note the
current's track ;

What crowds of fleeting fancies come dancing through
my brain !

And the good old days of Blankton, I live them o'er
again ;

What hopes and fears, gay smiles, sad tears, seem
mirrored in the mere,

While looking on its glassy face by tell-tale Blankton
Weir !

III.

I've seen it basking 'neath the rays of summer's golden

glow,

And when sweetly by the moonlight, silver ripples

ebb and flow ;

When Nature starts in spring-time, awakening into

life ;

When autumn leaves are falling, and the yellow corn

is rife ;

'Mid the rime and sleet of winter, all through the

live-long year,

I've watched the water rushing through this tide-worn

Blankton Weir.

IV.

And I mind me of one even, so calm and clear and
bright,

What songs we sang—whose voices rang—that lovely
summer night.

Where are the hearty voices now who trolled those
good old lays?

And where the silvery laughter that rang in bygone
days?

Come back, that night of long ago ! Come back, the
moonlight clear !

When hearts beat light, and eyes were bright, about
old Blankton Weir.

v.

Was ever indolence so sweet, were ever days so
fine,

As when we lounged in that old punt and played
with rod and line?

'Tis true few fish we caught there, but the good
old ale we quaffed,

As we chatted, too, and smoked there, and idled,
dreamed, and laughed :

Then thought we only of to-day, of morrow had no
fear,

For sorrow scarce had tinged the stream that flowed
through Blankton Weir.

VI.

Those dreamy August afternoons, when in our skiff
we lay,
To hear the current murmuring as slow it swirled
away ;
The plaintive hum of dragon-fly, the old weir's splash
and roar,
While *Some-one's* gentle voice, too, seems whispering
there once more ;
Come back, those days of love and trust, those times
of hope and fear,
When girls were girls, and hearts were hearts, about
old Blankton Weir !

VII.

Those brilliant sunny mornings when we tumbled
out of bed,

And hurried on a few rough clothes, and to the river
sped !

What laughing jyaunce hung about those merry days
agone,

We clove the rushing current at the early flush of
dawn !

‘ Tremendous headers ’ took we in the waters bright
and clear,

And splashed and dashed, and dived and swam, just
off old Blankton Weir.

VIII.

Then that pleasant picnic-party, when all the girls
were there,

In pretty morning dresses and with freshly-braided
hair;

Fair Annie, with the deep-blue eyes, and rosy, laugh-
ing Nell,

Dark Helen, sunny Amy, and the Howard girls as
well;

Ah! Lizzie, 'twas but yesterday—at least 'twould so
appear—

We plighted vows of constancy, not far from Blankton
Weir.

IX.

Those flashing eyes, those brave true hearts, are gone,
and few remain

To mourn the loss of sunny hours that ne'er come
back again :

Some married are—ah ! me, how changed—for they
will think no more

Of how they joined our chorus there, or helped to
pull the oar :

One gentle voice is hushed for aye—we miss a voice
so dear—

Who cheered along with evensong our path by
Blankton Weir.

X.

Amid the whirl of weary life, its worry and its
bore,

Comes back that well-loved lullaby—the old weir’s
distant roar:

It gilds the cloud of daily toil with sunshine’s fitful
gleams,

It breaks upon my slumber, and I hear it in my
dreams:

Like music of the good old times, it strikes upon
mine ear—

If there’s an air can banish care, ’tis that of Blankton
Weir!

XI.

I know the river's rushing, but it rushes not for
me,

I feel the morning blushing, though I am not
there to see ;

For younger hearts now live and love where once we
used to dwell,

And others laugh, and dream, and sing, in spots we
loved so well ;

Their motto '*Carpe diem*'—'twas ours for many a
year—

As show these rhymes of sunny times about old
Blankton Weir.



THE SEVEN AGES OF GIRLHOOD.

I.

AT Two, she is a tiny lass,
And joy she scarcely knows from sorrow ;
She scarce consults her looking-glass ;
She has no thought of sad to-morrow !

II.

At Four she is a merry maid,
And looks on aught but play as folly ;
She can't believe bright flowers fade—
That only sawdust is her dolly.

III.

At Eight, her troubles come in scores,
For oft she is perverse and haughty ;
A pouting puss in pinafores—
Who's sometimes whipped when she is naughty !

IV.

At Twelve, she is a saucy tease,
Who knows full well her glances rankle ;
Her petticoats scarce veil her knees,
And fairy frills scarce kiss her ankle.

V.

At Fifteen, she's the pearl of pets,
And feels assured her pow'r is strengthened ;
Her snowy school-girl trouserettes
Are hidden when her skirt is lengthened.

VI.

At Sixteen, she's the sweetest sweet,
And dresses in the height of fashion ;
She feels her heart 'neath bodice beat,
In earnest for the tender passion.

VII.

At Eighteen, p'r'aps she may be sold
Her lot to share, for worse or better ;
She'll either sell her heart for gold—
Or give it for a golden fetter !





ZOOLOGICAL MEMORIES.

I.

XH, Dora, my darling, can your recollection
Revert to a Sunday once early in June?
When leaving your Aunt's ever-watchful protection,
You saucily said you'd 'come back again soon,
But must see the seal and the spotted hyena,
And doted on zoöphytes scarlet and blue,'—
Poor Aunt left at three, and at six we'd not seen her—
That bright summer Sunday we met at the Zoo.

II.

You wore, I remember, the nicest of dresses,
So simple and fresh, though it would not compare

With Miss Buhl's splendid train, while your sunny
bright tresses

Could never out-rival her 'Brittany' hair :

Her parasol shaded the costliest bonnet—

'Twas gorgeous and showy, 'twas heavy and new ;

While yours was of lace, with blush roses upon it,

That gay summer Sunday we lounged in the Zoo.

III.

You recollect loitering down by the water—

I mean by the pond where the pelicans dwell—

A small glove was pressed, it was six and a quarter,

A hand rather smaller was p'raps pressed as well ;

You said it was nonsense, and would not believe me—

I vowed, on my honour, 'twas perfectly true—

Those lashes down-drooping could never deceive me,

That sweet summer Sunday we passed at the Zoo.

IV.

While strolling around that green pond edged with
ruses—

I wished we could wander for miles and for miles—
Your eyes brightly shone, whilst the loveliest blushes
Flushed cheeks dimpled o'er by the sweetest of
smiles.

Then archly you said, with the sweetest of glances,
'Who flirted at Prince's with Lily and Loo?
What makes you so churlish at dinners and dances,
When you can be so nice when we meet at the
Zoo?'

V.

How swift flew the hours as we wandered together,
Forgetful of Aunt as she sat in the shade!
'Twas really too bad in that broiling hot weather;
And when we returned what excuses you made!

‘Past six, Aunt? It can’t be! You surely are
joking—

We’ve not seen the zebra nor red kangaroo!’

Then prettily pouting, you looked so provoking,
That fine summer Sunday we roamed at the Zoo.

VI.

While bright autumn leaves in the country are falling,

And London is empty, the butterflies flown ;

That sunshiny Sunday I can’t help recalling,

As I sit in dull chambers and ponder alone.

And now you are down at ‘The Larches,’ my treasure,

To find short days long, for there’s nothing to do,

Does ever come o’er you with exquisite pleasure

The thought of that Sunday we loved at the Zoo?



A TRAVELLER'S TARANTELLA.

*Written in 'Murray's Handbook,' while the band in the Piazza San Marco
was playing the Tarantella from Masaniello.*

I.

TELL that the tourist can dream of or hear
about,

Crowds on your sight as you carelessly peer about,
Quaint water streets you so carefully steer about,

See the Rialto, and Square of St. Mark !

Floating in gondolas, laughing and jollity,

Cyprian wine of the very best quality,

At Florian's *caffè*—mid fun and frivolity—

Venice delightful from daylight to dark !

Musicians in plenty,

Play '*Ecco ridente*,'

Or '*Com'e gentil*,' in the still summer night ;
If you're in a hurry,
Pray look in your *Murray*—
You'll find his description is perfectly right !

II.

Albergo Reale and English society,
Bric-à-brac shops in their endless variety,
Plenty of pigeons not fearful of pie-ety,
Flutter and peck 'neath the bluest of skies.
Dreaming in Venice ? Ah, wildest of fallacies—
Bronzes and sculpture, mosaics and chalices,
Convents and churches and prisons and palaces,
See as you stand on the grim Bridge of Sighs !
The ballads of Byron,
You'll find will environ
The Doges and dodges and Brides of the Sea.
Don't get in a flurry,
But read it in *Murray*—
If you don't care about it, then listen to me !

III.

Thousands of thirsty mosquitoes are biting one,
Silvery moonlight is ever delighting one,
Music and mirth every moment inviting one—

Dreary old London we quickly forget !
Shylock and Portia—in short, the whole kit of 'em,
Readers of Shakespeare recall ev'ry bit of 'em ;
Troublesome guides, you can never get quit of 'em—

Pictures by Titian and old Tintoret !

The sock and the buskin,
With Rogers and Ruskin,
Are mixed in a muddle with palace and sight !

It may be a worry,

But don't forget *Murray*,
He'll throw on your darkness some excellent
light !

CAFFÉ FLORIAN, VENEZIA.



MAIDS OF THE MALLET.

I.

IF courtly old Watteau now wielded the palette,
How dainty the pictures his brush would have
drawn !

Could he but have seen the sweet Maids of the
Mallet
Who flutter and flirt on our velvety lawn !

II.

'Tis down by the Thames where the summer wind
bloweth,
Just serving to shiver the tremulous trees,
Where sleepy reeds bend to the ripple that floweth,
Scarce deigning to nod to the somnolent breeze.

III.

For *croquet*, the game, I have no admiration,
But who, in his senses, could ever refuse
To hammer his toes in a quiet flirtation
With one of these daintily-booted *croqueuses*?

IV.

The bright eye of Beatie send shafts that will rankle,
The smile of sweet Camille it comforts and kills;
You never, I'm sure, saw a neater-turned ankle
Than peeps from 'neath Jennie's white fanciful
frills.

V.

A part of our game I will give you a hint on—
If you're thirsty, and hanker for something and
ice—
A bountiful beaker of boraged Badminton
You will find, in the shade, is uncommonly nice!

VI.

Deep draughts from the two-handed, dew-clouded
chalice,

While musing alone, is most sweet, 'tis confessed ;
But sweeter than all to drink after sweet Alice,
And kiss the same silver her pouting lips pressed !

VII.

'Tis rapture to lounge in such exquisite clover,
To bask in the sunshine of Gwendolen's eyes !
With light-hearted Milly to be a gay 'rover,'
Or 'spoon' to the music of Rosalie's sighs !

VIII.

These Maids of the Mallet, they shake out their
tresses—

While men gather round at their siren-like call—
And artfully loop-up diaphanous dresses,
To break stalwart hearts as they'd *croquet* a ball !



NINA'S NECKLACE.

I.

I HAVE brought the string of pearls
For my prettiest of girls :

Let your merry laughter ring !

Do not reck

The wild ripple of your hair,

On your dimpled shoulders bare—

As I clasp the sheeny string

Round your neck !

II.

Here are sixteen snowy pearls,
Glad to nestle in your curls,
 Round your neck they closely cling
 With delight—
Fitting emblem of your years,
Free from sorrow, care and tears :
 Sixteen summers softly sing,
 Pure and bright !

III.

Though your sweetest sunny smiles,
And your winsome girlish wiles,
 Right and left you gaily fling—
 Merry miss !
From your lips I claim reward—
If you'll graciously accord?—
 I will clasp the snowy string
 With a kiss !



SAINT MAY:

A City Lyric.

I.

ET. ALOYS the Great is both mouldy and grim,
The Decalogue's dusty, the windows are dim ;
Not knowing the road there, you'll long have
to search

Before you discover this old City church ;
Yet often on fine Sunday mornings I stray,
To see a new saint, whom I've christened St. May.

II.

The one bell is cracked in its crazy old tower,
 The sermon oft lasts rather more than an hour ;
 The parson is prosy, the clerk eighty-three,
 The organ drones out in a sad minor key ;
 Yet quickly the moments I find fly away,
 I pass every week at the shrine of St. May.

III.

Of saints I've seen plenty in churches before—
 In Florence or Venice they're there by the score ;
 Agnese, Maria—the rest I forget—
 By Titian, Bassano, and brave Tintoret :
 They none can compare, though they're well in their
 way,
 In maidenly grace with my dainty St. May.

IV.

She sits in a high, ancient, black oaken pew,
Which almost conceals her fair face from my view ;
The sweetest of pictures it can't be denied,
With two tiny sisters who sit by her side,
Who lisp the responses, or kneel down to pray,
With little hands locked in the palm of St. May.

V.

She's young for a saint, for she's scarcely eighteen,
And ne'er could wear peas in those dainty *bottines* ;
Her locks are not shaven, and 'twould be a sin
To wear a hair-shirt next that delicate skin ;
Save diagonal stripes on a dress of light gray,
Stripes ne'er have been borne by bewitching St.
May.

VI.

She's almost too plump and too round for a saint,
 With sweet little dimples that Millais might paint;
 Without mediæval nor mortified mien,
 Or wimple of yellow, or background of green—
 A nimbus of hair throws its sunshiny ray
 Of glory around the fair face of St. May.

VII.

What surquayne or partlet could look better than
 My saint's curly jacket of black Astracan?
 What coif than her bonnet—a triumph of skill—
 Or alb than her petticoat edged with a frill?
 So sober, yet smiling—so grave, yet so gay,
 O where is a saint like my charming St. May?

VIII.

The sermon is finished, the blessing is o'er,
The sparse congregation drift out at the door ;
I pause, as I stroll down the gloomy old aisle,
To see my saint pass, and perchance get a smile :
I'd almost change faith, like the Vicar of Bray,
To pass all my life in adoring St. May.

IX.

I wend my way home to my chambers alone,
And sunshine is gone and the summer seems flown ;
But then does a vision of brightness arise,
Of pureness and truth in those eloquent eyes ;
For not a mere picture nor image of clay,
To worship by rubric, is gentle St. May.

X.

Through the weary, dull week, as it rolls on apace,
I'm haunted by thoughts of that tender young face ;
I dream of her spirit, so yielding and kind,
Her goodness of heart, and her pureness of mind ;
And I long for the hour, and count on the day,
To sit at a distance and gaze on St. May.

XI.

No doubt you'll be vastly surprised when you're told
Her name in the Calendar is not enrolled—
They prattled of ' May,' the sweet sisterly pair,
I added the ' Saint,'—she was canonized there.
If saints might wed sinners, I'd yield to her sway,
And straightway would fall on my knees to St. May !



MAIDEN MOUNTAINEERS.

A Sketch at Chamouni.

I.

LOOK at the strong little smart Alpine climbers,
Sated with scrambles o'er rivers and rocks
(Whose titles would puzzle the craftiest rhymers),

Proud of their *crampons* and red knickerbocks !
Brown are their hands and right ruddy their faces.

Hear them discourse on the mountains they've
'done' !

Watch the delight of their muscular graces,
Voting the *glissade* most exquisite fun !

II.

Edelweiss laughingly lurks in their tresses—

Though pretty, they're plucky as Balmat the Bold—
Daintily decked in the darlingest dresses,

They smile at the danger and laugh at the cold !
Hear them dilate upon *glaciers* and passes,

Peaks they have scaled, the expert little dears !
Snowstorms are naught to these limber young lasses,
Chamois are shamed by these fair mountaineers !





PRINCESS POPPY.

A Sleepy Song.

I.

DEATH the spreading trees in the garden
glade,

Where the poppies nod in the chequered
shade,

In a silken hammock she pouts and lies,
And smiles as she lazily droops her eyes ;
As the rook, the brook, and the dragon-fly
Combine in an exquisite lullaby—

In calm July.

II.

The daintiest dryad who softly sings
To the sweet leaf-music, and slowly swings ;
A delicate form and a sweet young face,
Lips parted in exquisite girlish grace.
A more perfect picture you'd ne'er descry,
'Neath the rustling leaves and the summer sky
In fair July !


III.

She smiles as the zephyr her cradle rocks,
With poppies atwine in her golden locks ;
She sighs and slumbers to song of the stream,
And slumbers and sighs through a languid dream ;
Ah ! pray who can tell me the reason why
This beauteous maiden in dreams should sigh,
In sweet July ?



A COMEDY.

Prologue.

‘ WAS all over between us, you thought, when
we parted,
’Twas good-bye to me and to trouble or care ;
A sigh and a tear, a poor boy broken-hearted,
Was naught, for what feelings had you then to
spare ?
’Twas nothing to you that my best hopes were
shattered,
You knew all the time that you meant we should
part ;
With fair words did *you* think I e’er could feel flattered,
From lips feigning truth with such falseness at
heart ?

ACT I.

Ah, lovely and lost one, I muse in the gloaming,
And think of one midsummer twilight last year,
But one little year past, when we two were roaming
With hand locked in hand by the still solemn mere.
Have *you*, love, forgotten that night and those pledges,
Half-whispered, half-sobbed, 'neath that calm summer sky?

In fancy I hear the faint shiver of sedges,
And still the low plash of the water seems nigh.

ACT II.

You've made, what the world calls, a capital marriage
Your dinners are perfect, your dances the rage;
They talk, at the clubs, of your new pony-carriage,
And sneer at your husband, who's double your age:
Ah! fairest of false ones, I'd have you remember,
Though blooming and bright be the freshness of May,
'Twill tremble before the cool breath of December,
'Twill silently droop and then wither away

ACT III.

They tell me you're happy ; and yet, on reflection,
I find they talk more of your wealth than of you ;
And if you have moments of thought and dejection,
It may be those moments are known but to few,
You've rubies and pearls and a brilliant tiara ;
You breakfast off Sèvres of the real *bleu du Roi* ;
'Tis better no doubt than a heart, *mia cara*,
And a poor posey ring, with its '*Pensez à moi ?*'

ACT IV.

Nay, blame not your husband, nor think you're used
badly,
'Twas simply a matter of money and trade ;
You named him your 'figure,' he paid it too gladly,
Your heart was no part of the bargain he made.
He purchased a wife to embellish his table,
To humour his whims and obey his behests,
One lovely and clever, one willing and able—
To prove his good taste and to talk to his guests.

ACT V.

At times, when 'mid riches and splendour you languish,

To still your poor conscience you fruitlessly try ;

As tears are fast falling in bitterest anguish,

You'll own there *is* something that money can't buy.

Yes, love, there are mem'ries e'en gold cannot stifle,

The ghost of a dead love that will not be laid ;

And while in the bright world of pleasure you trifle,

Do you never meet the sad eyes of the shade ?





ADIEU TO MABEL.

A Young Lady Aged Ten.

I.

GOOD-BYE, little shock-headed rosy-cheeked
May,
Farewell to your tales and your teaching :
Good-bye to your songs and your fairy-like
play,
Adieu to your prattle and preaching !

II.

Those eloquent sermons we heard with surprise,
From lips so enthrallingly simple :
You blinded our reason with light from your eyes,
And vanquished our hearts with a dimple !

III.

Why can't you remain a sweet ruddy-lipped child,
With bright tangled tresses free-flowing?
To carelessly carol bewitchingly wild,
For pray what's the use, pet, of growing?

IV.

Your laughter has never been saddened by sighs,
You wot not of care or of sorrow,
And tears have ne'er flooded your honest grey eyes
For grief that may come on the morrow.

V.

Good-bye, then, to sweet little sunny-haired pet.
She goes with our best wishes laden :
The light-hearted child we can never forget,
Will live in the lovable maiden !



CLOVER.

I.

DOWN by quiet river-reaches,
'Neath the spreading oaks and beeches,
'Mid the stately woods of Clieveden, hard by Maiden-
head to rest :
When sweet summer winds are blowing
O'er the grand old Thames swift flowing—
Then a picnic of all parties is undoubtedly the
best.

II.

You may possibly ride over,
And you'll find yourself in clover,
With the dearest little dryades beneath the shady
trees :
Who can mix a lobster salad
Or troll out the latest ballad,
Who can flirt or pull a pair of sculls, all equally with
ease !

III.

You can stroll down by the river,
Where the nodding sedges shiver,
Or make yourself quite useful carving fowls and
pigeon pies :
You can uncork endless bottles,
Just to moisten parched throattles—
Look unutterable language into winsome watchet
eyes !

IV.

When you're weary of the riot,
And may like to have some quiet,
Or to watch the peasants binding up the newly-reapen
 sheaves ;
You can hear the oak-trees rustle,
Far away from noise and bustle,
And can whisper silly nothings to the music of the
 leaves !

V.

Some-one's glance perhaps grows brighter,
And perchance her heart beats lighter
(I've good reason for supposing that you wander not
 alone) —
There's a charm in morning dresses,
And in loosely-braided tresses,
And I hear that magic power lurks in Clicquot and
 ozone !

VI.

In a sweet day-dream you wander,
'Neath the chequered shade, and ponder
Beyond the sight and hearing of the old folks and the
rest ;
All your earnest conversation
Is for *Some-one's* delectation—
And I should not be astonished if a little hand were
prest !

VII.

Then, when pales the sunset splendid
As the day is almost ended,
When shadows soft of eventide come stealing up the
glade ;
Her sweet undefined expression
Gives a half-concealed confession,
You've made some small impression on a dainty little
maid !



A BUTTERFLY BALLAD.

I.

BMILE, dainty little beauty,
And sing your sweetest song ;
Think pleasure but a duty,
And carol all day long !
The garden's green and shady,
And gay are golden hours ;
Come then, my gentle lady,
To gather fairest flow'rs !

II.

Away fling care and sorrow,
Be ever bright and gay ;
Lose sight of dull to-morrow,
In sunshine of to-day !
Though brightest blossoms shatter,
And lovely girls must fade—
To you what does it matter,
My merry little maid ?





PETS OF THE 'PETREL'

I.

HOUNGING at ease in the laziest attitude,
Fresh briny breezes are blowing so free ;
Never once thinking of longi—or lati—tude,
Whilst our swift schooner skims over the
sea.

II.

Smart little sailor-girls, laughing deliciously,
Soften the skipper with maidenly wiles ;
Climb where they oughtn't to, pouting capriciously,
Vanquish the boatswain with sunniest smiles.

III.

If a squall blows—as it will most unluckily—

Dear little damsels, the best of A. B.'s,

Face the salt spray, reef their petticoats pluckily,

Laugh at wet jackets and sing in the breeze!

IV.

Note them, ye maidens so silly and finical,

See the brown hands of each nautical dear;

Hear them discourse on a bobstay or binnacle,

Watch their delight when permitted to steer!

V.

E'en at the pumps they would take their turn steadily,

Though they are maidens be-dimpled and soft;

Sweet little 'salts' do their duty so readily,

Reef, 'bear a hand,' or would go up aloft.

VI.

Dinners on deck are divinely delectable—

Under the awning, well screened from the sun—
Some folks would dine *à la Russe* and respectable ;
Give *us* the laughing, the quaffing, and fun !

VII.

Dreaming when heats of the noontide so hazily
Shimmer around our becalmed little craft ;
Smoking and mooning, so languidly lazily,
Whilst some one reads 'neath the awning abaft.

VIII.

Popping at seagulls the girls say is villany,
'Cruel and brutal' they're heard to declare—
Though if by chance you are lucky and kill any,
Proudly the feathers they'll hasten to wear.

IX.

Dreaming in soft summer night so mysterious,
Watching the waves as they dash from the bows ;
Prattle becoming first sober, then serious,
Laughter soon softened to tremulous vows.

X.

Drifting from chaff into 'something particular,'
Though you intended but simply to 'spoon :'
Starlight is good for confession auricular,
Lunatics thrive in the light of the moon !

XI.

Down in the cabin at night, you most willingly
Cluster to hear, round the small pianette,
Sweet voices warble low, tender and thrillingly,
Siren-like songs that you fain would forget.

XII.

Far from the boredom of vapid society,
Leaving all care and all worry at home,
Swift speed the days in an endless variety,
While the trim 'Petrel' flies over the foam !





LUCY'S LIPS.



YOUR rosy little mouth—

Red as coral from the South—

Though meant not, Love, for missing

Quirk or quip :

Was expressly formed, I guess,

For some other lips to press,

What mortals call, Love, kissing

Lip to lip !



MY VALENTINE.

I.

LOVE not the sweetest of love protestations
Emblazoned by artists on paper of snow ;
The amorous glances and forced suspirations,
You purchase for money from Cupid & Co.

II.

Those pink chubby boys, with their impudent faces,
Their hearts and their darts and their old stock-in-trade,
Bedizened with tinsel, embowered in laces,
Shan't bear my love-song to my tender-eyed maid.

III.

Shall hireling muses e'er sing of her splendour,
Or trumpery poet at twopence a line ?
Shall e'er be a bookseller's shopman the vendor
Of pæan of praise to my sweet Valentine ?

IV.

I strike my own harp when I sing to my treasure,
I'll sing my own song or for ever be still ;
And watch her eyes sparkle with exquisite pleasure
At soft-spoken words which so easily thrill !

V.

I won't bring a harp, and I won't speak in numbers ;
We'll sit as of yore in the snug-curtained room ;
When old folks are taking post-prandial slumbers,
We'll dream by the fire 'twixt the glow and the gloom !

VI.

When sunny-brown tresses, in firelight, gleam golden,
And ripple down soft o'er a bosom of snow ;
When a dear, little waist is more closely enfolden—
There's sweetness in silence we both of us know !

VII.

Carissima mia, I don't mind confessing,
While soft silken love-locks I fondle and twine,
Though you tremble and blush, I can scarcely help
pressing,
That white little hand warmly nestled in mine !

VIII.

There's thrilling expression in tightly-locked fingers,
And music in whispers half broken by sighs.
In soft dainty dimples a kiss-print still lingers,
While love gladly lurks in those violet eyes.

IX.

Away with all tears, not a vestige of sorrow
Shall chequer these moments so sweetly divine !
In sunny to-day I'll not dream of to-morrow,
But whisper my love to my own Valentine.

X.

Then O for the rapture to whisper through tresses,
Soft scented, atwine round those shell-tinted ears ;
Away with all doubts and away with distresses,
And perish the fancy of sorrow and tears.

XI.

Now, darling, pray tell me if this is not better
Than commonplace verses one can't understand ?
Than parcel, or picture, or overgrown letter,
Duly stamped and despatched through St. Martin's-
le-Grand ?

XII.

Then leave such devices to boarding-school misses,
Who love through the post at a distance of miles ;
I like to make love 'midst a shower of kisses,
And press pouting lips till they're softened to smiles !





AN APRIL 'SERMON.

I.

FAIR Florence is a butterfly
Who loves the brightest flow'rs,
But she will pout and fret and sigh
E'en during passing show'rs ;
When sunbeams gild each golden curl,
She'll carol light and gay,
But O ! I fear she's not the girl
For any rainy day !

II.

There's Isabel, the sweetest pet,
And fairest of the fair ;
She'll trifle with a coronet,
Or jilt a millionaire :
A brown-eyed, bonny, cool coquette—
Brave hearts she will betray—
Their owners she will quite forget
On any rainy day !

III.

Sweet Geraldine in summer days,
Is just the girl for me ;
Her smiles are then beyond all praise,
Her heart is full of glee :
But had she not her Arab steed,
Her Lady's Mile in May,
I fear she would look dull indeed
On any rainy day !

IV.

I fancy Rene might be true,
 She's such a little dear ;
If I had an estate or two,
 And thousands ten a year !
A Dresden china little dear,
 But not the sort of clay
To form the idol I'd revere
 On any rainy day.

V.

Majestic Maud would fix her throne
 In lordly hall or park ;
She could not love for love alone
 A Foreign Office clerk :
A little house in Camden Town,
 Her lover's little pay,
I fear would make my lady frown
 On any rainy day !

VI.

Proud Ethel is the sort of queen
At Opera to reign ;
To show her jewels flashing sheen,
And rich brocaded train :
She ne'er could wear a muslin dress,
Nor ' cab it ' to the play ;
She's not the girl, I must confess,
For any rainy day !

VII.

I know a pet of eighteen years,
Who, true in joy and pain,
Will sweetly smile through falling tears,
Like April sun through rain :
Whose sky-blue eyes most brightly shine
When clouds are coldest grey—
I'd like to call that beauty mine
On any rainy day !

VIII.

I would that she were close to me,
I'd read her eyes, and then,
P'r'aps to this simple homily—
She'd sigh a sweet 'Amen :'
How sunny life's sad monotone,
Illumined by this ray !
With such a darling for my own
On any rainy day !





OFF AND AWAY!

An August Regret.

1.

O the gay London season is over !
I wished it would come o'er again,
When the night that you started for Dover,
I bade you good-bye at the train.
I am doomed by the lateness of session
In London all autumn to stay,
Through its heat, and ennui, and oppression,
Whilst you, love, are off and away.

II.

How your pretty eyes drooped just at starting !

You promised to send me your *carte*,

And I gave you 'Two Kisses' at parting—

I mean the new novel by Smart.

Not a moment for quiet flirtation—

The guard his white ensign unfurled—

As the train was just leaving the station,

I gave you my heart and the 'World.'

III.

You are off amid vineyards and mountains,

Where myrtle is mingled with maize ;

Where the olive o'ershadows bright fountains

You'll dream through the fine autumn days ;

Where the roseate sunset is flushing

Its gleam o'er the amethyst lake,

Whilst the blue ripples seem to be hushing

To slumber the shore where they break.

IV.

You remember the day at Chiavenna

We mounted the rugged inclines?

And the sail that we took to Varenna?

The luncheon we had 'neath the vines?

Vino d'Asti spumante, agoni—

With bright eyes to flash o'er the cheer.

At the inn of Signora Marcionni,

The sunniest day of last year.

V.

Then that night at Baveno, whilst smoking,

When *Some-one* lit my cigarette,

To be found by mama 'twas provoking—

Your eyes flashed a tearful regret:

How she bore you away in a hurry,

Despite all excuse I could make!

And said, quoting from odious *Murray*,

'Night air was so bad by the lake.'

VI.

Will you dream 'neath a snowy umbrella,
With Tauchnitz each hot afternoon?
Will you go to the Isola Bella,
Or row by the light of the moon?
Will you lounge 'neath the pink oleander,
Comparing this year with the last?
Will you e'er in the garden meander,
And think with regret of the past?

VII.

When the fragrance of flowers is lightly
Awaft on the soft evening breeze,
Whilst the pale moon is shining so brightly
And sweet is the music of trees,—
Will you muse, in that clear autumn weather,
With feelings of pleasure and pain?
Will you stroll where we wandered together,
To wish but last year back again?

VIII.

Perhaps memory's clearest reflection
Will mirror your future ; but yet
You may dwell on with tender affection
That night I can never forget ;
When I would have said something, but wavered—
How quickly such chances slip by !—
Ah ! my darling, had I been so favoured,
Pray what would have been your reply ?





LITTLE UNDINE.

I.



APRIL is sunshine and sadness ;
'Tis like a fair girl when she cries !
A tinge of sweet sorrow in gladness,
A brightness in tear-bedewed eyes !
The rain, in a pattering cadence,
Falls fast upon pathway and street ;
It fearfully soaks pretty maidens,
And ruthlessly splashes their feet.
Behold her, my beauty, *la bella*,
Of aqueous fairies the queen
With smart little silken umbrella,
My darling, my little Undine !

II.

Just watch her step over a puddle,
Regardless of milliners' bills,
When all is confusion and muddle
And spattered are snowiest frills.
When darlings in otter and sable,
So sopped are their jackets and curls,
To class them you're clearly unable
As pretty drowned kittens or girls !
Behold her, my darling so dapper,
A sweetie of supple sixteen,
In neat little waterproof wrapper,
My darling, my little Undine !

III.

Behold the bright spherules prismatic,

That saucily spangle her hair !

She scoffs at all terrors rheumatic ;

She's shod with most exquisite care.

She laughs and will carol and chatter—

Through clouds seeing patches of blue—

Not heeding the soft April patter,

Not caring for getting wet through !

Behold her, my lady of showers,

My fay in a splashed crinoline ;

My goddess of rainbows and flowers,

My darling, my little Undine !



LONDON-BY-THE-SEA.

I.



BRIGHTON in November

Is what one should remember,

When from town so dull and foggy we all
of us would flee ;

Where air is pure and bracing,

The breezes we are facing,

Away the blues there chasing—

At our London-by-the-Sea.

II.

The morning's plunge at Brill's there,
It scares away all ills there,
How dull or sad or sober you may ever chance to be ;
The sunshine bright is flashing,
While in the water splashing,
Away dull care you're dashing—
At bright London-by-the-Sea.

III.

You're sure to find collected
On pier a crowd protected
From weather as they listen to a symphony in B :
'Neath crystal screen's flirtation,
Scarce screened from observation,
You'll find with consternation—
At gay London-by-the-Sea.

IV.

Grave judges there and jokers,
With actors and stock-brokers,
With every sort of person of high and low degree ;
Professor of art fistic,
And preacher ritualistic,
With poet wild and mystic—
At brave London-by-the-Sea.

V.

O'er downs to madly scamper,
Without a care to hamper—
'Tis just the thing to do you good I think you'll quite
agree :
All worry you are crushing,
Your blood is gaily flushing,
As off you're swiftly rushing—
At light London-by-the-Sea.

VI.

With Amazons fast going,
Such tangled tresses flowing,
Such skirts and dainty ribbons in breezes blowing
free :

What joy to canter faster
With beauties of the castor,
As humble riding master,
At smart London-by-the-Sea.

VII.

Then frequently there passes
An army of school lasses,
So full of buoyant spirits and of gladsome girlish glee
That when they softly patter
The *pavé* o'er and chatter,
I'm as mad as any hatter—
At fair London-by-the-Sea.

VIII.

Some take a modest tiffin,
On bun or Norfolk biffin,
At Streeter's or at Mainwaring's, but that will not suit
me,
Though folks may call me glutton
I do not care a button,
But love a lunch with Mutton—
At this London-by-the-Sea.

IX.

The flys are slow and mouldy,
As ev'ry one has told ye,
Its shrimps by far the finest you could ever wish for
tea ;
Its shops are rare and splendid,
Where ev'rything is vended
Till money's all expended—
At dear London-by-the-Sea.

X.

If spirits you would lighten
Consult good Doctor Brighton,
And swallow his prescription and abide by his decree :
If nerves be weak or shaken
Just try a month with Bacon,
His physic soon is taken—
At our London-by-the-Sea.





A RIVER RHYME.

I.

FAR, far from the town,
I spied drifting down,
Cheeks ruddy and brown—
Eyes so blue—
A sweet sailor-girl,
With hair all a-curl—
In canoe.

II.

She dreams in her boat,
And sweet is the note
That white little throat

Carols through :

She languidly glides,
And skilfully guides—

Her canoe.

III.

'Neath tremulous trees,
She loiters at ease,
And I, if you please

Wonder who

May be the sweet maid,
Who moons in the shade—

Inconnue.

IV.

O pray who can tell,
Is she Nina or Nell?
Or Beatie or Bell?

Is she Loo?

The laziest pet,
You ever saw yet—

In canoe.

V.

The river's like glass—
As slowly I pass,
This sweet little lass,

Raises two

Forget-me-not eyes,
In laughing surprise—

From canoe.

VI.

And as I float by,
Said I ' Miss, O why?
O why may not I
 Drift with you?'
Said she, with a start,
'I've no room in my heart—
 Or canoe!'





SNOWFLAKE.

I.



NE Christmas down at Beaumont Hall—
'Twas vastly pleasant, I remember—
The happy moments I recall
Of that cold, bitter, bleak December ;
Though winter's sky was overcast,
Though dull and dismal was the weather,
Snowflake and I—those times are past—
Danced, sang, and whispered oft together !

II.

I called her Snowflake ; she looked bright
As snow fresh fallen in the morning,
Just flushed by kiss of rosy light,
Of sunny rays when day is dawning :
Her bosom mocked the snowdrops white
That decked the tresses of my goddess ;
A truer heart or one more light
Ne'er beat beneath a maiden's bodice.

III.

Ah, me ! I recollect those hours—
Since then I've grown a trifle older—
I found just now some faded flow'rs,
Reminding me of all I told her.
And Snowflake ? Well, 'tis rather hard
For hearts with one another smitten—
But, let me see, I think some bard
Says "Lovers' vows in snow are written !"



A COVENT GARDEN CANTICLE.

I.

PINK blossoms fall and shatter
Before the balmy breeze ;
The rain has ceased to patter
On newly-leafen trees ;
The squares are green and shady,
The parks are bright and gay—
Comes like a dainty lady,
Sweet-scented, rosy May !

II.

Her home in Covent Garden
 Its glories I would vaunt—
I'm sure I beg her pardon,
 I mean her London haunt—
The brightest of all bowers,
 With dainty perfumes faint,
Decked out with sweetest flowers,
 Miss Mutrie loves to paint.

III.

Of crisp and cooling salads
 A Sybarité might sing ;
Or write enchanting ballads
 Of dishes for a king :
Amidst the banquet floral,
 He lazily might dream ;
And chant a pæan choral,
 On strawberries-and-cream

IV.

Sweet ruddy-cheeked Pomona
Here, out of season, trips—
Of course we all have known her,
With strawb'ry-stain'd lips.
Her freshness filched from peaches,
Her tawny hair from pines,
Her voice which sweetly teaches
Sweet lessons from the vines.

V.

In this town-house of Flora
Where maids love time to kill;
Comes dainty, dimpled Dora,
And laughter-loving Lil !
Come pets for bouquets longing,
From Johnston's or from Buck's,
Round early green peas thronging—
Delicious little ducks !

VI.

Sweet girls with eyes outvying
The peerless gentian blue ;
Whose blushing ch  eks are trying
To rival peachen hue.
Each way a damsel goes is
A sunbeam 'midst the gloom ;
And maidens mock the roses
In rhapsody of bloom !

VII.

A bouquet for Ophelia
When she appears to-night ;
The snowiest camelia
For bridal bosom white.
A blushing blossom, paling
'Fore cheeks of maidens gay—
Its charm is unavailing
Near sweetest flowers of May !

VIII.

As pinkest petals perish,
As brightest blossoms fade,
So droops the pet we cherish,
So wanes each merry maid.
But glory sempiternal,
Of sunshine loves to play,
When, lulled by breezes vernal,
Bloom bonny flowers of May !





THE IMPARTIAL.

A Boat-Race Sketch.

I.

IN sorrow and joy she has seen the beginning—
Her lightness of spirit half dashed by the
‘blues’—

With cheers in her heart for the crew who are
winning,

While tears fill her eyes for those fated to lose.

II.

If you'll narrowly watch, 'mid the noise and conten-
tion,

You'll note, as her Arab paws proudly the dust,
A deftly-twined bouquet of speedwell and gentian
Beneath her white collar half carelessly thrust !

III.

The tint of a night in the still summer weather
Her tight-fitting habit just serves to unfold,
While delicate cuffs are scarce fastened together
By dainty-wrought fetters of turquoise and gold.

IV.

Ah, climax of sweet girlish neutral devices !
What smiles for the winners, for losers what sighs!—
She has twined her fair hair with the colours of Isis,
While those of the Cam glitter bright in her eyes.





TEN AND TWENTY.

A Drawing-Room Reberrie.

I.

CAN ten long years have passed away
Since with that baby Clarry Fay
My boyish heart was smitten?
She was a charming little tease,
Who tore her clothes and grazed her knees,
Who sometimes clomb up apple-trees
As agile as a kitten!

II.

The merriest of romping girls
Was Clarry, with her tangled curls ;
All day her voice was trilling !
As, dancing madly to and fro,
Her full short skirt just served to show
Tucked trousers, white as driven snow—
A miracle of frilling.

III.

Whole mornings then were passed, I ween,
In paying homage to this queen
Of bread-and-butter misses ;
Sometimes, when no one else was by,
I used to kiss her on the sly ;
And Clarry was by no means shy,
But paid my kiss with kisses !

IV.

The livelong day we played and walked,
Or in the orchard swung and talked—
 'Twas thus our liking strengthened :
At last one gloomy, tearful day
My playfellow was sent away
To school, and there she had to stay—
 Until her frocks were lengthened.

V.

At Eton then in classic lore
I plunged, but liked the plunging more
 At 'Athens' with a shiver :
Both love and learning met their fate
When pulling in the College Eight ;
I quite forgot my little mate,
 When sculling on the river !

VI.

And now I met once more to-day
Not saucy Clare, but fair Miss Fay—
The sweetest 'sweet and twenty!'
Who rules the season, for I know
At Prince's, Park, or flower-show,
In Opera-box, or in the Row,
Her lovers throng in plenty.

VII.

Ah ! since that rosy, laughing child,
Would jump upon her pony wild
And round the paddock canter ;
Or madly with black Hector race,
Or climb for nests in Lyndith Chase,
For which she got in sad disgrace,
O tempora mutantur !

VIII.

Miss Fay will never know me now,
But with a studied, solemn bow
She'll mask sweet dimpled Clarry—
Not know me? How her eyes flash bright !
She shakes my hand and grasps it tight !
And laughingly exclaims, "I'm right,
'Tis my old playmate Harry !"





GEORGIE'S GIRDLE.

XH ! your supple slender waist
Should be never tightly laced,
So leave each Nature's charm, sweet—

As you found it :

If you want a tighter zone,
Some day, darling, when alone,
I'll wind a loving arm, sweet—

Around it !





IN THE FOAM.

I.



COME where bright beauty unlooses her tresses,
And emerald ripples scarce ruffle the sand !
Where mermaidens dance in the loveliest dresses,
And white little feet gaily sport on the strand !
Just watch the fair girls in their gambols capricious—
No surf in the sunshine more fully at home—
See dimpled young darlings divinely delicious
Bound over the breaker and flirt with the foam !

II.

In turquoise-hued trousers a fair Aphrodite—
The rarest of rosy-cheeked plump little pets—
Hand in hand with a sweet little kissable Clytie,
Distractingly dripping in pink pantalettes.
How dainty white limbs gaily flash in the billow !
How musical voices sing over the sea !
While gracefully floating, with wave for a pillow,
They gladden the shore with their resonant glee !

III.

O say then, stern cynic, with manner monastic,
Wilt wander unmoved by our surf-beaten sands ?
When sweet summer sirens hold revel fantastic,
And weave coloured weeds round their white little
hands ?

They shake the salt spray in a torrent prismatic,
They pout o'er the pebbles and swim o'er the
shells ;
As light-hearted laughter grows yet more ecstatic,
They dive where the queen of the mermaiden
dwells !

IV.

Then fling back your hair from your sweet sunny
faces,
And ripple your locks to your delicate knees ;
While free from the fetters of latchets and laces,
While sporting in sunshine and breasting the
breeze !
Serene as the seagull so sleepily swaying,
They fitfully flutter and restlessly roam :
These winsome young witches so prettily playing
As brave as the breaker, as free as the foam.



COULEUR DE ROSE.

A Six Months' Courtship.

I.

HER soft sables, you must know,
Kept off winter's frost and snow,
And the cruel wind did blow
When we met :
The demurest little nun,
Though she'd sometimes change in fun,
Like a snowflake in the sun,—
Little pet !

II.

Pray what meant those frequent sighs,
When those fathomless brown eyes
Sometimes gazed with glad surprise
Into mine ?

It was joy to be alone,
With my arm around her zone,
And to claim her for my own
Valentine !

III.

'For the romping wind of March
Was she bending like a larch,
As her glance seemed yet more arch
Through her curls :
Came in view the ankles neat,
Were revealed the dainty feet,
And the *chaussure* of my sweet
Girl of girls !

IV.

Ah ! my brightest fay of fays
Was most fickle in her ways,
In chameleon April days—

Sun and rain !

She would sometimes be put out,
She would laugh or cry and pout ;
Smiling through her tears in doubt,
Joy and pain !

V.

But in May so freshly fair
She would cull its blossoms rare,
Just to twine them in her hair—

Gay and wild :

A sweet pæan of perfume,
A gay sunny song of bloom,
She would chase away all gloom—
Laughing child !

VI.

In the balmy summer time,
With gay roses in their prime,
No one deems it is a crime

Then to 'spoon' !

So *sub rosâ* 'neath bright bow'rs,
Over-heard by blushing flow'rs,
Did I whisper through sweet hours
Once in June !

VII.

Ah ! her cheek will shame the rose,
With the tint that comes and goes,
And more radiantly glows,

When it's prest !

Whilst her loving eyes flash bright,
With a sweet and sparkling light,
And white roses scarce look white

In her breast !

VIII.

As the bee booms round the bed,
Where the petals pink are shed,
Sweetest honey from the red

Softly sips :

So in moments half divine,
In sweet rapture I entwine
A slim waist whilst stealing mine—
From her lips !

IX.

O ! when summer skies were blue,
And we fancied hearts were true,
While the long day loving through—

Who'd suppose ?

Our grand castles built in Spain,
Or that love could ever wane,
And its fragrance but remain,

Like the rose ?



AMANTIUM IRÆ.

I.

AM I forgiven? You smile through your tears,
love ;

May I return to your favour again ?

Tell me, O quickly, and quiet my fears, love—

Yours be the task, dear, to lighten my pain ;

No more wet lashes, nor sobbing and pouting,

Feelings of anger can't dwell in your breast—

Banish all sadness, all sorrow and doubting,

Try to forget, when my fault is confest.

Grieved beyond measure, O say that I'm shriven,

Tell me, my treasure, now—Am I forgiven ?

II.

Am I forgiven? Now dry your eyes, dearest,
 You'd ne'er be hurt by Kate Calloner's wiles,
Look in my face now, your kindest and clearest,
 Dimples look better, love, brimming with smiles :
Where was the harm in that least bit of flirting?
 Chatting with Kate as she sat on the stair—
Could you imagine I meant to be hurting,
 Trifling, or trying to cause you a care?
Man is but mortal, and hard have I striven,
Tell me, my pretty one—Am I forgiven?

III.

Am I forgiven? A sin one confesses,
 Surely, my darling, is almost atoned—
Pitying glances and tender caresses,
 Show me already my fault is condoned :

Sunshine at last, and of tears no more traces,
Sweet smiles are striving to drive away sighs,
Pleasure o'erflushes the fairest of faces,
Love is aglow in the brightest of eyes !
Faith nursed by charity ever has thriven—
What do you say, darling ?—Am I forgiven ?





A BREEZY BALLAD.

I.



LD March flings golden tresses
Over faces soft and sweet,
And romps with skirts and dresses,
Showing pretty legs and feet :
Each dimpled darling flushes,
Looking coyly arch and fair,
With wealth of blooming blushes,
Seen through tangled mass of hair !

II.

He comes down in a bustle
From the mountains and the hills—
Makes sheeny skirts to rustle
When revealing snowy frills.
He'll ruffle each gay feather,
On these dainty little ducks—
Show boots of untanned leather
'Neath their petticoats in tucks !

III.

Your nerves he may be shocking,
When, some breezy afternoon,
He shows a silken stocking
Or some silver-buckled shoon :
And p'raps you may be able,
'Mid the surging broidered clothes,
To see boots edged with sable,
With some quaintly-stripen hose.

IV.

O'er sealskin smooth he passes,
And will make its surface rough ;
He'll chap red lips of lasses,
And he'll knot a monkey muff :
But bright eyes still beam brighter—
While each beauty looks more arch—
Light spirits yet grow lighter,
'Neath the bracing breeze of March !





TANGLE LOCK.

A Sketcher's Song.

I.



H! a rare old Lock was Tangle ; you could
sketch there or could angle,
You could dream or moon or meditate all
through the summer hours ;
With its lime-trees all a-quiver, by the swiftly-flowing
river,
With its vines and grateful greenery, its beehives
and its bowers.

II.

'Twas a miniature collection of rare pictures in perfection,

'Twas the rarest combination of bright flowers,
fruit, and trees ;

There were honeysuckles tender, there were roses in
their splendour,

And hollyhocks of every tint scarce nodding in the
breeze.

III.

That quaint sunny porch rose-laden, and the soft-
eyed trustful maiden,

With the tangled briar dipping in the tuneful
brawling brook ;

And the elms grand shadows flinging, with the grave
old rooks there swinging,

Were, I thought, the sort of pictures to be painted
in my book.

IV.

'Neath the limes so cool and shady, came a gentle
 little lady,
Very often in the morning to our pleasant sketch-
 ing-place ;
In the daintiest of dresses, and sweet freshly-braided
 tresses,
With a rosebud in her bosom and a smile upon
 her face !

V.

She was young and fair and simple, and on either
 cheek a dimple
Seemed to ask for lover's kisses, and her Christian
 name was Kate ;
Her grey eyes were soft and tender, and her figure
 lithe and slender,
And her lips were round and ruddy, while her years
 scarce doubled eight !

VI.

While the solemn rooks were cawing, she would slyly
 watch me drawing,
And I'd try to read the meaning of those eloquent
 grey eyes ;
In their undefined expression, did I find a mute con-
 fession,
Which half justified their drooping, and accounted
 for her sighs.

VII.

'Twas thus I saw and drew her, and I thus began to
 woo her,
To the humming of the dragon-fly and murmur of
 the stream ;
Might I really then caress her? Could I venture
 then to press her
Little hand, or was I sleeping through a lovely
 summer dream?

VIII.

If you'd listen to my story, I would tell you of the
glory,
Of the laziness and languor of those sleepy summer
days :
I could tell of woodland roaming and soft whispers
in the gloaming,
Of the laughter and the love-making and lotos-
eating laze !

IX.

I could tell of ballad-singing, and a sweet voice
clearly ringing,
To the queer old square piano in the quaint old-
fashioned room ;
Of those silent moments golden, of a dainty waist
enfolden,
While the sweet grey eyes of Katie gladly glittered
in the gloom !

X.

P'raps my taste for art diminished, for my picture
ne'er was finished—

Though I made of Kate a study long before I did
depart,

Which I gave unto her father, for myself reserving
rather

The sweet study of a trustful and a loving little
heart!





LOVE-LOCKS.

I.

IN Arcady's fair groves there dwells
A Wizard, and 'tis there he sells
All sorts of cunning beauty spells,
From snow-white skins to blushes :
For pretty girls are scented toys ;
Young men can buy *pomade Hongroise* ;
There's hair-dye for the gay old boys,
And ivory-backed brushes.

II.

There beauty's tresses are unfurled,
There blonde moustachios are twirled,
And darlings who have curls are curled,
While those who've none buy plenty :
The Wizard keeps the key, 'tis true,
To turn grey locks to raven hue,
And makes bald coots of sixty-two
Become smart youths of twenty.

III.

My hair is getting thin, and so
To Arcady I sometimes go
In search of ' balm,' for you must know
I hold '*Dum spiro, spero* :'
Though washes of all sorts I've tried,
And countless ointments have applied,
Old Time has made my parting wide,
And sunk my hopes to zero.

IV.

The other day it came to pass,
I sat me down before the glass,
And saw reflected there, alas !

A face grown old and jaded :
That face was scored by lines of care,
The forehead was quite high and bare ;
For, strange to say, the thick brown hair
Of other days had faded !

V.

Ah, how that face has changed since times
Long passed away, when at 'The Limes'
My laughter rang with midnight chimes—

My song was gay and early !
Then hearts were hearts, and blue were skies,
And tender were sweet Lucy's eyes—
When I believed in woman's sighs,
My locks were thick and curly !

VI.

As Mr. Wizard snips and snips,
I think of Lucy's laughing lips,
And whilst he just takes off the tips,
I muse on bygone pleasures :
At home I have a tiny tress
Of soft brown hair ; I must confess,
Although it caused me much distress,
'Tis treasured 'mid my treasures.

VII.

Ah, would that night come back again
When she took from her *châtelaine*
Her scissors !—it was not in vain.
I hear her laugh the while her
Fingers, dimpled soft and fair,
Thrill as 'she clips one lock of hair ;
While I, like Samson, sit still there,
And smile on sweet Dalilah.

VIII.

When blonde and brown locks interlace,
Or scented tresses sweep your face,
While laughter unto sighs gives place,
 And pouting lips are present ;
Or meek grey eyes droop still more meek,
And dimples play at hide-and-seek,
There's but one language lips can speak—
 'Tis brief, but rather pleasant !

IX.

In place of Lucy's hand I feel
The chilly touch of Wizard's steel,
Who brings me back from the ideal,
 By talk of lime-juice water ;
And beauty's fingers no more hold
My locks—they're by the barber sold
To stuff arm-chairs ; sometimes, I'm told,
 They're used to mix with mortar !

X.

And Lucy? She's at Bangalore,
And married to old Colonel Bore ;
They say she flirts from two to four—
 Indeed, I do not doubt them.
'Tis hard to steer among the rocks
Of life, without some awkward knocks ;
They say that 'Love laughs loud at locks'—
 He howls at those without them !





THE KING OF THE CRADLE.

A Baby Idyll.

I.

DRAW back the cradle-curtains, Kate,
While watch and ward you're keeping,
Let's see the monarch in his state,
And view him whilst he's sleeping.
He smiles and clasps his tiny hand,
With sunbeams o'er him gleaming—
A world of baby fairyland
He visits while he's dreaming.

II.

Monarch of pearly powder-puff
Asleep in nest so cosy,
Shielded from breath of breezes rough
By curtains warm and rosy :
He slumbers soundly in his cell,
As weak as one decrepid,
Though King of Coral, Lord of Bell,
And Knight of Bath that's tepid !

III.

Ah, lucky tyrant ! Happy lot !
Fair watchers without number,
Who sweetly sing beside his cot,
And hush him off to slumber ;
White hands in wait to smooth so neat
His pillow when it's rumped—
A couch of rose leaves soft and sweet,
Not one of which is crumpled !

IV.

Will yonder dainty, dimpled hand—
Size, nothing and a quarter—
E'er grasp a sabre, lead a band,
To glory and to slaughter?
Or, may I ask, will those blue eyes—
In baby *patois* 'peepers'—
E'er in the House of Commons rise,
And strive to catch the Speaker's?

V.

Will that smooth brow o'er Hansard frown,
Confused by lore statistic?
Or will those lips e'er stir the town
From pulpit ritualistic?
Will e'er that tiny Sybarite
Become an author noted?
That little brain the world's delight,
Its work by all men quoted?

VI.

Though rosy, dimpled, plump, and round,
 Though fragile, soft, and tender,
Sometimes, alas ! it may be found
 The thread of life is slender !
A little shoe, a bitten glove—
 Affection never waning—
The shattered idol of our love
 Is all that is remaining !

VII.

Then does one chance, in fancy, hear
 Small feet in childish patter,
Tread soft as they a grave draw near,
 And voices hush their chatter ;
'Tis small and new ; they pause in fear,
 Beneath the grey church tower,
To consecrate it by a tear
 And deck it with a flower.

VIII.

Who can predict the future, Kate—
Your fondest aspiration !
Who knows the solemn laws of fate,
That govern our creation ?
Who knows what lot awaits your boy—
Of happiness or sorrow ?
Sufficient for to-day is joy,
Leave tears, sweet, for to-morrow !





A LITTLE LOVE-LETTER.

I.



PRETTY pet with the tangled hair,

Going to muse by the summer sea—

O dimpled darling with cheeks so fair,

Tell me, O dearest, when musing there,

Will you think of me ?

II.

O sweetest sweet, when the salt breeze sighs

'Mid silken locks ever flowing free,

While gulls glint white against sleepy skies,

Will looks of those bright brown loving eyes

E'er be turned to me ?

III.

Ah, laughing child, when your eyes beam bright,
And lips are parted in girlish glee ;
When the shore is glad in still summer night,
With your sweet soft smile, and your laughter light,
Do you smile on me ?

IV.

When the moon is up, and sleeps the land
To tender music in minor key ;
When the silver-ripples hush the strand
And scarcely dimple the golden sand,
Will you dream of me ?

V.

Poor little heart ! when your cheeks are wet
With tears that sadden one's heart to see,
Your moist lips tremble—you can't forget
Sometimes the sun through the rain shines, pet,
When you weep for me !



TWO CHRISTMAS EVES.

I.

WITHOUT, the trees are swerving,
With wild, uncertain curving—

For the wind is howling sadly, and all is dull and
drear.

Whilst listening to its moaning,

Its sighing and its groaning,

Comes back to me the memory of many a bygone
year !

II.

Within, are merry faces,
Glad with a thousand graces ;
Whilst berries red mock maiden lips 'midst loving
mistletoe !
As bright eyes flash the brighter,
And every heart grows lighter—
Beneath the cheery influence of Christmas' ruddy
glow.

III.

When snowflakes down are floating,
Whilst a weird and rimy coating
Weaves its mystic, lace-like pattern all o'er the win-
dow-pane ;
E'en when the fire burns brightest,
E'en when the laugh is lightest,
I mind me of those dear old times ne'er to come back
again !

IV.

That silvery laughter ringing
Sad memory is bringing,
That Christmas-time was once to me as merry and as
 gay—
Now every smile and gladness
Is mingled with a sadness,
Of pledges made — since broken — on that dull
 December day !

V.

How well can I remember
That drear day in December !
We whispered in yon curtained bay, in accents low
 and few :
A soft white hand I pressed there,
Whilst a trembling voice confessed there,
Words of love so lovingly that I'd fain believe them
 true !

VI.

That that sweet voice was lying,
'Twixt smiling and 'twixt sighing,
In the bitterest of anguish I will ne'er consent to
own ;
Yet no fond face is near me,
To smile upon or cheer me,
At Christmas, as in days ago.—I sit and muse
alone !

VII.

Can true love be more rare now,
Or beauty e'en less fair now,
And hearts composed of sterner stuff than those of
former times ?
For Christmas seems less cheery—
Indeed, bygone and weary—
Most unutterably dreary to him who pens these
rhymes !

VIII.

Thus often in the gloaming
My saddened thoughts are roaming—
Whilst winter winds are blowing, and the fire is burn-
ing low,
As I sit here and ponder,
My memory will wander
To hopes and joys of Christmas on that night of long
ago.





MOTHER O' PEARL.

I.



PEARL is the sweetest creation

E'er shod with the tiniest boots—

I wish she had ne'er a relation,

I wish I'd a balance with Coutts !

They say Pearl is so like her mother ;

Was she like my pet when a girl ?

Will pet become just such another,

Some day as the Mother o' Pearl ?

II.

My Pearl is the prettiest kitten,
She laughs—will she ever grow fat?
Or e'er, with mad jealousy smitten,
Develop the mind of a cat?
Her figure get round as a bubble?
Her hair lose its exquisite curl?
Her chin get undimpled and double,
Like that of the Mother o' Pearl?

III.

Will Pearl become pert and capricious,
And haughty and give herself airs?
(I thought, when she looked so delicious
Last night when we sat on the stairs.)
Will she patronise *me* in her bounty,
And boast of her uncle the Earl?
Or talk with cold pride of the county,
As often does Mother o' Pearl?

IV.

Will Pearl ever sneer at her betters,
Or e'er act the amateur spy?
And try to read other folk's letters,
Or listen at doors on the sly? . . .
If boy to the man be the father,
Mama to the woman is—girl—
As daughter-in-law I would rather
Not father the Mother o' Pearl !





HER NEST.

I.

LIKE the tiny pet of a sculptor's dream,
Half smothered in delicate trifle cream,
Like Aphrodite in sea-foam tost,
Or a lovely girl in a snow-drift lost :
With her dimpled hand to her red lips prest,
She smiles as she sleeps in her warm white nest.
She sleeps, as a sunbeam through curtain creeps,
And a soft white bosom 'neath cambric peeps,
She sleeps.

II.


Her lissome figure 'tis hard to trace
'Neath the snowy linen and filmy lace ;
With her chesnut hair o'er the pillow spread,
Like an aureola around her head ;
A sweet living saint on Carrara tomb,
She smiles as she dreams in her dainty room.
She dreams in her sleep of the sunny beams
That dare kiss her cheek with their rosy gleams—
She dreams !





IN THE GRAPERY.

I.

HICK hang the peaches one gathers so readily—
Shrunk the stream running down to the
sea—

Plums on the wall ripen slowly and steadily,
To song of the reaper low hummeth the bee.
Sultry's the sunshine so hot in the pinery,
Orange and russet are tinting the leaves,
Luscious ripe clusters bloom black in the vinery,
Yellow the meadows with golden-eared sheaves.

II.

Heat of the noontide is rising there hazily—

Culling bright flowers their hair to entwine,

Light-hearted lasses are lounging there lazily,

Plucking the purple that hangs from the vine,

Singing and laughing in fulness of pleasure there,

Roving at random and choosing by chance,

Piling up pictures of glowing rich treasure there,

Worthy the pencil of Duffield or Lance.

III.

Ruddy-bloomed clusters are getting importunate,

Fain to be martyred along with the rest ;

Weep as they gaze on and envy the fortunate

Rosebud asleep on my lady-love's breast !

Would that my change unto grapes were permissible !

Lovingly toying, I'd kiss and ne'er tell—

Pressed close to lips so delightfully kissable,

Ripe ruby lips of my sweet little Nell !



A NUTSHELL NOVEL.

For a Miniature Audie.

VOL. I.



WINNING wile,
A sunny smile,
A feather :
A tiny talk,
A pleasant walk,
Together !

VOL. II.

A little doubt,
A playful pout,
Capricious :
A merry miss,
A stolen kiss,
Delicious !!

VOL. III.

You ask mama,
Consult papa,
With pleasure :
And both repent,
This rash event,
At leisure !!!

A Gallery of Girls.

“SIX girls who are now staying at the Hall are so typical of the pictures of six well-known artists, that they are now always called by the names of the painters instead of their own.”—

Extract from a letter from the country.



I.

MISS LIZZIE LESLIE.



WHO can paint the picture of my pet ?

As 'mid the grey-green hay she child-like
kneels,

Who shows a dainty slipper, then conceals
'Neath tangled grass its celadon rosette.
A soft white robe, a broïdered chemisette
Scarce veils her rounded bosom, as it steals
A subtle charm from that it half reveals—
As sweet and modest as the violet !

A gipsy hat casts shadows, pearly grey,
Across the golden sunshine of her smile.
Her glance e'en cynics dare not disobey,
Her dimples even iron hearts beguile—
A dainty despot on a throne of hay,
Who conquers all by magic girlish wile !





II.

MISS PEPITA PHILLIP.



BEAUTY from the sunny South I crown
With this unworthy laurel of my lay.

Her glossy raven tresses, notice pray,
From which a lace mantilla ripples down,
To half conceal her lip-red silken gown.

Note burning eyes, which flash from grave to gay,
And cheeks so kissed by ardent sunny ray,
That bright carnation blushes through the brown !

No baby kiss-play lurks in *that* ripe mouth,
Nor trifling with effete coquettish art ;
But earnest passion of the sunny South—
To love or die, with all its soul and heart !
If *she* should hate to love, how sad your fate ;
But sadder still if she should love to hate !





III.

MISS GERTIE GAINSBOROUGH.

XH ! thrice happy the crumpled red rose leaves,
Asleep on her bosom so warm and white ;
And the turquoise ribbon half lost to sight,
In the silken tresses it interweaves !
Thrice happy the mortal who once receives,
From her fathomless eyes so brown and bright,
The radiant glances of inner light
That glitter from under their drooping eaves.

Ah ! sweet are those eloquent lips a-pout,
Whose pleadings a stoic could scarce resist,
Now rounded in rapture, now drooped in doubt,
But daintily red as if newly kist.
'Tis joy to believe in the truth that lies
Far down in the depths of those sweet brown eyes !





IV.

MISS MINNIE MILLAIS.

'MID falling blossoms dreams my lady fair—
What lustrous splendour in those deep
blue eyes,

That half reflect the tint of southern skies !
What gold-lit glory in that chesnut hair,
Down rippling on her dimpled shoulders bare !
What poet's song could half her charms comprise,
Or painter's brush her grace immortalize ?—
So sweet, so queenly, and so debonair.

'Mid falling blossoms, pink and ruby red
My lady strolls with calm majestic mien,
Though lips are mocked by roses overhead,
And cheeks by shattered damask on the green,
And bosom by the fairest Guelder shed—
She reigns of all the roses still the queen !





V.

MISS ROSIE LEECH.

DOWN on the sands there strolls a merry maid,
Aglow with ruddy health and gladsome glee ;
She breasts the breezes of the summer sea,
And lets each zephyr trifle with each braid ;
Laughs gaily as her petticoats evade
Her girlish grasp and wildly flutter free,
As, bending to some boisterous decree,
The neatest foot and ankle are displayed.

Her youthful rounded figure you may trace
Half pouting, as rude Boreas unfurls
A wealth of snowy frillery and lace,
A glory of soft golden rippled curls.
Comes, blushing with a rare unconscious grace,
The bonniest of England's bonny girls !





VI.

MISS CECIL SANDYS.

SEE how she crouches on an autumn morn,
Where poppies 'mid the corn play hide-and-
seek,

And plucks them in an idle girlish freak.
Her lips are curved with ill-disguisèd scorn,
Her tresses wear the tint of sunburnt corn ;
And poppies might have stained her flaming cheek :
A modern maiden, with a grace antique—
A dainty damsel, lovely and lovelorn !

Proud as beautiful, passionate as proud,
She twists and bites her tawny, tangled mane ;
While eyes the tint of purple thunder-cloud
Flash fiercely with an eloquent disdain !
And then that haughty head is bowed—
A song of sorrow and a poem of pain.





DEDICATION.

*O, SOME-ONE, if your laughing eyes,
Beam brighter with a glad surprise,
I know by intuition,
You'll deign to look this volume through,
I dedicate, my sweet, to you,
Without your 'kind permission.'*

*Ah! will it make you frown and pout?
Or will you think, beyond all doubt,
No better muse than mine is?
And will you laugh, or sigh and weep?
Or will you, darling, go to sleep
Before you get to*

FINIS ?

EXTRACTS FROM OPINIONS OF THE PRESS
ON
BOUDOIR BALLADS,
BY
J. ASHBY-STERRY.

Land and Water.

‘One of the most charming books that we have come across for a long time. From cover to cover there is not a single dull page in it. Mr. Sterry’s book is the fruit of a healthy, happy mind, of the experience of a man who is willing to see that men are still honest, women good and pure. . . . The whole book, in its unaffectedly poetic tone, genial humour, and remarkable finish of style, is quite one of the very best books of the year.’

Home News.

‘A volume of verse excellent in its light and sportive way, and certain to be popular with a very wide circle of readers.’

Nonconformist.

‘We cannot say that we feel that we have done full justice to Mr. Sterry’s delightful volume, for the best of the pieces are too long for us to quote *in extenso*. . . . We have no doubt that by a large circle of readers this book will be eagerly welcomed, and furnish a new source of innocent pleasure to not a few.’

Pictorial World.

‘Mr. Sterry has long been known as one of the happiest of versifiers, and to read his songs is something like enjoying a feast of strawberries and cream in the best of all good company. . . . “Boudoir Ballads” is emphatically a volume that every lover of light and graceful poetry should possess, as being a book to be turned to and read again and again.’

Morning Post.

‘Enchanting ballads. . . . It is not possible to dwell on the elaborate beauty of the metrical forms here adopted, but we cannot part from this delightful volume without a word of praise on the score of the writer’s easy, elegant, and melodious measures, than which he could have chosen no more charming or more effective vehicle for these latest, and we trust not the last, inspirations of his muse.’

Observer.

‘Mr. Sterry is a delightful companion ; at his best he is well-nigh without a rival amongst light-hearted songsters. . . . His *vers de société* are altogether admirable of their kind ; and the dainty task upon which he has expended his labour of love could not possibly be accomplished with more winning grace of manner, or more genial melody of expression.’

Court Journal.

‘A volume of charming verses full of graceful fancy. No more appropriate title could have been given to these fascinating *vers de société*.’

Notes and Queries.

‘Mr. Sterry is a master in drawing-room verses. . . . His nymphs with pretty adornings are not exactly made for the wear and tear of life, but they are pretty things for a swain to sing in graceful roundellettes. Mr. Sterry’s book will have to stand the wear and tear of a world of readers. When they have got through it they will find themselves refreshed and invigorated, and that is no little testimony in its favour.’

Leeds Mercury.

‘Apt in every way is the title Mr. Sterry has bestowed upon his collection of society verses. The volume itself is one of the daintiest that has yet been published. With its softly-toned paper, artistic embellishments, and dainty binding, it is just the book for Beauty to lay upon her private table, and to open in her moments of luxurious weariness or *ennui*. Wholly in keeping with the appearance are the contents. Before all living competitors Mr. Sterry is the poet of society as it now exists.

Wherever pretty girls may be expected, there their bard is to be found. Gaily and a trifle saucily he sings of them, their desires and their doings. . . . He carols joyously and well.'

Weekly Times.

'He seems to have the power of touching with his magic talisman the most commonplace objects, and transmuting them into gold.'

Glasgow News of the Week.

'This truly is a tome which the delicate hands of Beauty will hold fondly as the lustrous eyes glance rapidly over the fascinating pages; for is not this, so to speak, the epic of British girlhood? . . . Mr. Sterry sings but as the linnet sings, and with no language but a delightful chirrup, which sounds throughout his pages. Graceful fancy is the key-note of his work, as becomes the general subject of his song.'

Bell's Weekly Messenger.

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